

Common Core State Standards Initiative

An Initiative of
the Council of Chief State School Officers
and the National Governors Association
Center for Best Practices



What is the Common Core State Standards Initiative?

- The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a significant and historic opportunity for states to collectively develop and adopt a core set of academic standards in mathematics and English language arts

Why is this important?

- Currently, every state has its own set of academic standards, meaning public education students in each state are learning to different levels
- This initiative will allow equal access to an excellent education
- All students must be prepared to compete with not only their American peers in the next state, but with students from around the world
- 49 states and territories have signed on to the Common Core State Standards Initiative led by the NGA Center and CCSSO
- This initiative will potentially affect 43.5 million students which is about 87% of the student population (Source: SchoolDataDirect.org; 2007)

Why is a common core of state standards good for students?

- It will help prepare students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in college and careers
- Expectations will be consistent for all kids and not dependent on a student's zip code
- It will help students with transitions between states
- Clearer standards will help students understand what is expected of them and allow for more self-directed learning by students

Why is a common core of state standards good for parents?

- Helps parents understand exactly what students need to know and be able to do
- Helps parents support their children and educators by making expectations clear and goals high
- Provides equal access to a high quality education
- Provides opportunities to meaningfully engage parents

Why is a common core of state standards good for educators?

- Allows for more focused pre-service and professional development
- Assures that what is taught is aligned with assessments including formative, summative, and benchmarking
- Provides the opportunity for instructors to tailor curriculum and teaching methods
- Informs the development of a curriculum that promotes deep understanding for all children

Why is a common core of state standards good for states?

- Allows states to align curricula to internationally benchmarked standards
- Allows states to ensure professional development for educators is based on best practices
- Creates the opportunity for America to compete for high-wage, high-skill jobs in a knowledge-based economy
- Allows for the development of a common assessment
- Gives states the opportunity to compare and evaluate policies that affect student achievement across states
- Creates potential economies of scale around areas such as curriculum development and assessment

What is being produced and when?

- The NGA Center and CCSSO are leading the process in partnership with ACT, the College Board, and Achieve to develop the common core state standards in mathematics and English language arts
- July 2009: release draft college and career ready standards
- December 2009: release of draft standards for grades K-12

How is this common core being developed?

- The standards will be based on research and evidence from leading national organizations and high-performing states and countries
- The standards will reflect what a student needs to be successful in college and in the workplace
- States provide input and review throughout the process
- Levels of input, development, review, and validation are in place

What does the process look like?

- CCSSO and the NGA Center in partnership with ACT, the College Board, and Achieve have established the common core development, advisory, and validation process
 - AFT, NEA, the Alliance for Excellent Education, the Business Roundtable, the Coalition for Student Achievement, the Hunt Institute, NASBE, and others are supporting the initiative through various means
 - A National Forum on Common Standards shares ideas, gathers input, and informs the initiative
 - A Standards Development Group is defining and writing the common core state standards

Continued: What does the process look like?

- A Feedback Group informs the work of the Development Group and provides input and guidance as drafts of the standards are developed
- A Validation Committee ensures the standards are research and evidence-based; this group is neutral to and completely independent of the Standards Development Group

What will the common core standards look like?

- Fewer, clearer, and higher
- Articulate to parents, teachers, and the general public expectations for what students will know and be able to do, grade by grade, and when they graduate from high school
- Internationally benchmarked
- Research and evidence based
- Ready for states to adopt

What happens after the common core standards are developed?

- Adoption of the common core state standards is voluntary for states
- Each state will follow its individual process for coalition-building and adoption
- States will be asked to share their timelines for adoption of the common core
- States choosing to adopt the common core state standards have agreed the common core will represent at least 85% of the state's standards in mathematics and English language arts
- There is an obvious role for assessment; some states will voluntarily come together to develop new, innovative, common assessments

What happens after states adopt common core standards?

- The common core state standards are the first step in transforming our education system. For systemic change to occur:
 - Educators must be given resources, tools, and time to adjust classroom practice.
 - Instructional materials need to be developed that align to the standards.
 - Assessments will be developed to measure student progress.
 - Federal, state, and district policies will need to be re-examined to ensure they support alignment of the common core -- throughout the system -- with student achievement.

How can I get more information?

- Visit the Common Core State Standards website pages to learn more:
www.nga.org or www.ccsso.org
- Subscribe to Common Core State Standards updates at www.ccsso.org or the NGA newsletter at join-nganews@talk.nga.org

How can I support this initiative?

- Write a statement of support for the initiative and send it to commonstandards@ccsso.org and webmaster@nga.org.
- Send information to your constituents in your newsletter.
- Hold webcast/conference call with your constituents about the initiative.
- Have CCSSO/NGA present at one of your conferences.
- Share information about the initiative during your meetings on the Hill.
- Provide information that your state affiliates can share with their constituents.
- Provide feedback to CCSSO/NGA about what messages resonate with your constituents.